



## Amy Lum Fern

*Interviewed by Joe Rossi (1991)  
Narrative edited by Cynthia Oshiro*

**Amy Lum Fern** was born in Honolulu in 1909. She received her early education at Central Grammar School and later attended McKinley High School. After graduating from McKinley in 1928, she entered the University of Hawai'i, where she earned her teaching degree in 1933.

Fern spent her first two years as a teacher at Waimea High School on Kaua'i. She then taught for eight years at Farrington High School, eight years at Kūhiō Elementary School, and twelve years at Dole Intermediate School. She retired from full-time teaching in 1972.

Her interests included gardening and volunteer work. Fern won the Frank Gardner Memorial Award in 2001 for her service to Meals on Wheels. She also was active with the O'ahu Retired Teachers Association [ORTA].

### Parents

My father [Ong Lum] worked in a Chinese dry goods store. When he came from China, I understand, he used to be a salesman going to the neighbor islands. He was much older than my mother. I was in high school when he decided to go back to China. You know, the Chinese people always wanted to go back to the homeland to die. And I think he wasn't well at that time, so he went back to China, and he died there.

My mother [Mary Akahiakuleana Lum] was born in Lahaina, Maui, of an old-time Hawaiian family. My mother was a housewife in the beginning, then later on, as we grew older and able to take care of ourselves, she worked for the playground [i.e., parks and recreation department], like a supervisor. And then, later on, she went back to normal, teacher-training school [Territorial Normal and Training School], to become a teacher. She was an ambitious sort of person, and she wanted to improve herself, so she never gave up on that. She finished in 1924. She taught at 'Aiea School, that was her first school. I was in about the eighth grade or a freshman in high school at that time. By that time, too, she and my father had separated.

### Central Grammar School

I went to Central Grammar. It was, at that time, first to eighth grade. It was a big school and it was a really cosmopolitan school.<sup>1</sup> I think that was the grammar school that many of the Caucasian kids came to, so I had many Caucasian classmates. Each one of my grammar school teachers was a Caucasian woman originally from someplace else. And then we had all the other ethnic groups.

At Central Grammar, once a month we'd have a flag ceremony out in the open. And I remember my music teacher in the fifth grade, Mrs. Bowen, would lead the singing of the whole assembly. That was my first introduction to singing Hawaiian songs.

At that time we worked in the cafeteria, too, once a month maybe. We used to like that because we had free lunch then. We could eat whatever they served. Otherwise, we'd have just plain bread-and-butter sandwich or bread-and-jelly sandwich for lunch.

But I remember the occasions when we did have a nickel or so to buy lunch. There was a corner store near the school that sold *chow fun* [Chinese fried noodle-and-vegetable dish], two packages for five cents. And oh, I remember they had more bean sprouts than anything else, but it was so good you'd practically eat the package, too.

Princess Ruth [Ke'elikōlani, 1826–1883], who was one of the wealthiest among the Hawaiian royalty, had this beautiful home that they used as a school.<sup>2</sup> The rooms were so large, enough to house a class of students. And I remember the room that I was in [in] fifth grade had a high ceiling, and there was a seal on the top of the ceiling. Once a week, on Fridays I think it was, during the long lunch recess on the *lānai* [porch], one of the girls would play the piano, and it was like a social time.

Our eighth-grade graduation picture was taken on the steps of that building, and then shortly after—I don't know what year it was, but I think when I was at McKinley—they demolished that building.

### Cunha Lane

In the later grades, like around the fourth grade and fifth grade, my mother was working at the playground as one of the playground supervisors. I used to go to one of the parks where she was and then play there with some other friends that I made. Otherwise, you know, where we lived there was a lane. I had a younger brother, and I had Japanese girlfriends across the street from our house in this lane. And we used to play marbles; we used to play *peewee*,<sup>3</sup> which they don't play nowadays.

My recollection of growing up was in the Cunha Lane where Foster [Botanical] Garden is now, the extension to River Street in that area. We had a two-bedroom home. And we had a nice yard. My father used to do the yard work, and I would help him. I remember doing it on Sundays. I think that's where my love for growing things started. I used to have a little garden. I planted cosmos, which I liked, and we had some roses in the yard.

I think the owner of the place, Cunha, must have owned that whole piece of property, and he must have planted different kinds of mango trees. Every yard had a different kind of mango tree. So I grew up climbing mango trees during mango season, eating all kinds of mangos. In one of the neighbor's yards there was a huge plum tree. I think they call it the Java plum. And during the season, my mother used to have my brother collect the fruit, and she'd make plum jelly.

There was a Hawaiian neighbor in one of the houses, and several times during the year they would have a *lū'au*. So I remember hearing squealing pigs early in the morning when they were slaughtering. That was my first exposure in seeing a pig being cooked underground in the *imu*. Of course, the neighbors used to just rubberneck. There would be the music. We'd watch them doing the *hula*. No paid entertainers, it's just the ones who came to the party provided their own entertainment. I don't know whether it was 'ōkolehao<sup>4</sup> or whatever, but it always ended up in a fight. It was kind of exciting, and yet it didn't get too violent. (Laughs)

I used to go to Kaumakapili Church. And that's quite a distance from where we lived, but you never thought about it at that time. There was a Kauluwela Lane where a lot of old Chinese families and part-Hawaiian families lived. I had a girlfriend from grammar school, she lived in Kauluwela Lane. She came from the big Yap family. We used to go to Kauluwela Mission in the afternoon, and it was an extension of Sunday school.

Easter and Christmas and Mother's Day, they'd have little exercises. We were always given little verses to memorize and recite, so that was kind of an exciting time. And I remember at Christmas time they always had little boxes of candy that they passed out to us, just a small amount of candy. And that was great, too.

Once in a while I guess I had a spare nickel. They had these wax candies that looked a long candle. And you chewed it just like gum. But around this long cylinder they had a ring, and that ring was just like a million-dollar ring to us. It had a little imitation stone, tiny little stone. Oh, that used to be the biggest treat. You know, it's good fun to think of little things bringing you so much joy.

And yet, we didn't waste it, we didn't throw it around, and we didn't keep on accumulating. Just one, maybe, in the whole year, that was sufficient for us.

## McKinley High School

At that time, [Dr.] Miles E. Cary was the principal. Everybody remembers him well. He got involved within the community. He was such a nice person, and he treated everybody so well. He remembered students and their names. I think he stood up for the local kids. And he followed his students' progress.

In those days, I think, we all respected the teachers. And even if a teacher we felt was too strict or too stern, I don't remember anybody answering back or cutting up in class. We were really serious about our studies.

I don't remember being sick from high school, staying home for any reason at all. I went regularly. [But] I remember the one time playing hooky from school. (Laughs) And I don't know how we had our swimsuit, but we cut class and went to Waikīkī to swim, had a good time, and never thought [too much about it]. I mean, we didn't have to serve detention or anything. They just chalked it up to your absence, that's all.

I had good English teachers, and they made English fun. My senior English teacher was a very strict teacher. And she mentioned one time that she worked hard to see that we passed the exam to get into the University of Hawai'i, because—I don't understand what the reasons were, but evidently it must have been difficult for the so-called local kids to get in. So she worked hard to give us all the background, and she always was so pleased when she found out that certain ones had been accepted.

I took French for three years. And it was just a textbook kind of French. My third-year French teacher was a male, Mr. Victor Ligda. He was also the coach of the swimming team. And some of the fellows in the class claimed that he was partial to girls because he always gave us the high grades (laughs). But that was just reciting what he wanted us to recite, so it wasn't difficult at all.

Another favorite class of mine was orchestra. Mr. [Walter] Maygrove started the school orchestra. I learned to play the cello under him. I think when she [i.e., mother] was working at the playground she had some of her own money, so she started me on piano lessons. And because I had had piano—I could read notes—it made it easier. And then he invited me to come to band classes. I learned how to play the trombone.

At that time they used to have oratorical contests among the high schools, and we'd play for the program in the beginning or in between. A full symphony orchestra. And then he also started a fife-and-drum corps, so I took up the fife, too. That was an extracurricular activity—after-school kind of thing. Never got very good at it, but we were exposed to that, too.

One of the band boys who was a good trumpet player formed a little dance orchestra, so I used to play the piano for them. Some of it I played by ear or some from music. "Five

Foot Two, Eyes of Blue” and stuff like that (chuckles).

The four years I was in McKinley we had a pretty good basketball team. When I was a junior I started dating one of the basketball players, and he became my husband later on.

ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] was a big thing during high school. And the boys would elect a [female] sponsor to represent their battalion. It was just an honorary kind of position. I remember I was a sponsor for three years, and each year it was for a different group. And not that I was going with any of the boys. In my senior year, the captain of the band said, “You were Mr. Maygrove's favorite, so that's why you became the band sponsor” (laughs).

We felt very special, because when the boys had to march in, like the Armistice Day Parade, we used to march with them. And then when they had a field day, we'd be there to represent the whole ROTC unit. Every boy [attending McKinley High School], I think, was part of the ROTC unit at that time. It was not an elective.

But it was fun, because we had our uniform. Dressmakers were not too expensive in those days. So because we had to have all the same type of uniform—and it was always the gold-colored material, rayon or something like that, with black bands—each of us had ours made.

But we didn't dress up fancily, I don't remember. Many of us sewed our own dresses. No slacks, all dresses.

We had to take physical education—we called it PE—but that was one of my weak points. I wasn't very physically active. And for PE we'd have the big black bloomers and the white sailor tops.

The big hall for one of the proms was at what they called Waikīkī Park. And it's, I think, [across] where the [Hilton] Hawaiian Village is now. And we had little cards where you signed up for dances. Then there was Young Hotel Roof Garden, where one of my classmates says we had our senior banquet. And he remembers giving me a *lei*. I don't remember that part. But anyway, we had our senior banquet followed by a dance.

My class—the class of '28—by that time the McKinley High School auditorium had been built, and so we were the first class to graduate in the new auditorium. So it was quite special. I remember one of my mother's first cousins, she was always good to us, and she gave me some money to buy a graduation dress. And in those days they didn't give so many *lei*, but they had little bouquets of flowers—pretty little bouquets—and friends and relatives would give us these little bouquets for graduation.

## University of Hawai'i

In the general courses at the university, we never had any [education] methods course. It was later on, when we finished all of the general courses. We had a course in literature for children. I had an excellent geography teacher, Miss

[Lorna] Jarrett—who taught us how to present a subject. We'd choose our own title and prepare for it and then present it to the class.

Then we had to do our practice teaching. If I remember correctly, I [taught] a few weeks in the first grade. That was held at the old [Territorial] Normal [and] Training School. They had the regular elementary classes there. And I remember my supervisor then, Miss [Florence] Avison, she was thorough. You had to have everything organized, what you're going to start off with, and what you're going to teach every hour of the day.

And then I went to [teach] the fifth grade, and I had a Miss [Mary] Engle, who became a principal. And there again, the unit was a little bit different from what you taught in the first grade. After we finished that year, the following year we went on probationary teaching, and that's when I was sent to Kalākaua Intermediate School.

There was a Mrs. [Ivah] Feiteira. She was my immediate supervisor. She was very thorough, too. She'd come in and look over your plans. And I had a seventh-grade and eighth-grade English/social studies class, and that's where I taught for a whole semester. We earned \$44.88 a month.

I got married at the end of my sophomore year at the university. I had my first baby, and then when she was two I lost her. She just died overnight. When they performed an autopsy they found that one of her lymph glands had just enlarged and suffocated her. So that was a big loss to me. And then I had my second child, Robin. She's my only daughter now.

So I stayed out of school, and then I went back for my fifth year. And it was after my fifth year that I got my certificate to go and teach.

## Waimea High School

I met a former classmate of mine who had been teaching at Waimea High School [on Kaua'i], and when she saw me, summertime, she said, “Amy, you got a job?” “No.” “I got a job for you. Teach my band class up in Waimea High School.” And I said, “I can't teach band. I don't have a background for band.” She said, “If you can read music, you can teach band.”

She convinced me to take over the class because she wanted to teach in town [i.e., Honolulu]. She couldn't leave that position unless she found her replacement. Because I needed a job, I said, “Okay, I'll take it.” In those days they took the teachers wherever they could get them, whether you had the major in that particular subject or not.

So I had a band class, and I had a chorus class, and then I had what they called a core studies class, that's English and social studies. So the English and social studies class was no problem because I had had training for that. The chorus class—well, I really had no training for it except that I could play the piano, and I could read music. We had a songbook.

We just let them choose the songs and they sang the songs.

Then the band class—at least I could keep time. And the kids were so good. There were some boys who were excellent musicians in that class. And they told me afterwards, yeah, once in a while they'd play off on their own, but I would never catch on. So they had a good time, and I had a good time, and we got along fine (laughs).

We used to play for the football games. And we had band uniforms. Today some of those kids are good friends of mine. We played for the county fair, and we got first place because I think I was the only female bandleader (chuckles).

Mr. [Dallas] McLaren was my first principal. He was really an idealist, I think. He had high objectives. And if we had any questions, we'd go and talk to him, and he'd give us all his reasons. We'd never get anything resolved, so we'd do it the way we wanted to. But he was a gentleman.

There at Waimea we had a yearly money-raising project—we called it the Waimea High School Festival—to raise money for different kinds of equipment. The first year I was there he made me chairman, so I had a lot of leeway. My roommate was the physical education teacher. She had a lot of good ideas, some of the cute little dances that she had with her girls and some of the boys. So we put on a good program in this school—we had a school auditorium. And we raised enough money. The second year he also put me in charge of the Waimea festival, so I had two years of that.

We lived in the teachers' cottage the first year. There were eight of us, two to a room. And, oh, I never had it so good. We hired a girl in the community, a Japanese girl, who was our maid. She did the cleaning every day, she fixed our beds, she fixed breakfast, lunch, and dinner for us every day. We were right on the campus, so we'd just go home for lunch. She had Sundays off, so Sunday we either had breakfast out or prepared our own, or sometimes we went on picnics.

[President Franklin D.] Roosevelt had these camp[s], where they reforested areas. And there was a CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp up at Kōke'e. And so every Monday evening, this young Baptist minister would drive my roommate and me, because I played the piano for his services, and we'd have dinner there with the boys. And then he'd conduct the service, and we'd have songs, the hymnals.

And then every Sunday I would play for him at the Waimea Christian Church and at another community church, so I would play for them there.

Waimea was a nice community. They had a community association, they had a community hall. We even put up, with the community, an operetta. And there were basketball games in this community hall, and there were lots of places where you could go hiking safely on that island. So I really enjoyed my two-year stay there.

My husband and daughter lived in Honolulu. So my husband stayed with my mother, and his mother and his

sisters took care of Robin. And then weekends he'd either come up, or I'd go [back home] by boat. And then the plane started, so on long holiday weekends he'd come up or I'd come home.

## Farrington High School

From Waimea I came to Farrington [High School]. One of my friends there—my mother's friend, really—had started the Hawaiian instruments class. And her classes were so popular they needed another Hawaiian instruments class. She knew I was out teaching [at Waimea], and she knew I could play the *'ukulele*, and so she got permission from the principal to have me come in. And at that time, well, you couldn't get to Honolulu otherwise. That's why so many of my own classmates at McKinley who went out to teach from normal school, they stayed out in the country seven, eight years. They got married and made their homes on the neighbor islands. But I came back to town.

I had a sophomore English/social studies class. They called it core studies at that time. I had one class of that, and the rest of the classes were in Hawaiian instruments.

At Farrington, you had all the local kids, no Caucasian kids. You had Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, part Hawaiians. And I didn't have any disciplinary problems within the class, but I remember one year one of the kids was gambling under one of the bungalows, and so I turned him in for that. But that's the most serious problem I ever had with anybody, I think.

Later on at Farrington they started the big carnivals. We had about at least four carnival shows going on besides all the side concessions. And the kids were so talented—musically and vocally and dramatically—that we could put on these. I remember the first year I had a Wild West show. The second year I had like a Carmen Miranda show. I had one girl who later on became a professional singer, and she was so good. And I think I had only two years of carnival, because then [World] War [II] came on.

You know, there used to be a Princess Theatre on Fort Street. They've since demolished that building. But every Saturday night they would have different groups put on a show. They were paid for putting on the show. One way of, I guess, organizations to earn money. And so my carnival segment—we were going to put on a show on the Saturday night, and Sunday morning they had that bombing of Pearl Harbor. Our show went on, and then that was it.

## War years

I worked in an identification section down at where Jefferson [Elementary] School is, fingerprinting the citizens. Everybody had to have an ID [identification card], and that's where we fingerprinted them.

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Some of them [i.e., teachers], were sent out to the rural areas. Some people went to Pearl Harbor to work as clerks. Some people went to work in the pineapple fields to supervise students who had to work in fields, but I never had to do that.

At Farrington we went into double schedule. We had classes in the morning and then another group of classes in the afternoon. We couldn't use the whole campus because they [i.e., U.S. Army] were using the cafeteria to take care of the wounded. They set it up as a hospital. I taught the afternoon shift, and Mrs. [Lorna] Burger, who had the other Hawaiian instruments classes, taught the morning shift. That's when I had to teach a class in commercial training, even though I didn't have a background in that. That was just simple commercial business. And we had a textbook for that, so that was okay.

I remember during those years, they had dug out trenches, and there were practice air raids where we had to go into these trenches for protection.

That was an interesting time, staying months through blackouts. We lived in a small cottage in Kapahulu, and there were not too many windows to black out. Right next door was a Japanese-language school, and they had national guardsmen on duty right over there, just to supervise the building or to man the building.<sup>5</sup> So we felt pretty safe where we were.

[There was] rationing for different kinds of staples. We had to stand in line so we could buy a bottle of liquor for somebody else, maybe, because we didn't use it ourselves. Standing in line for buying *poi*, I remember doing that. And then one of my teacher friends, her husband belonged to the national guard unit, and he had to serve. But he could get Hershey bars, and oh, you couldn't buy that in the stores. And that was such a treat to get one Hershey bar.

Many of the boys enlisted in the army. Later on they had the GI Bill, so they were able to get whatever further education they needed [at no cost].

## Kūhiō School

Then my husband got into the contracting business. And he was doing pretty well, so he said, "Oh, maybe you should take a year off." So I took a year off. And then, I think maybe I got bored, not having anything regular to do during that year off, so I went back. I did some substituting first, and then I was offered a permanent position at Kūhiō School. I had the fifth grade there. I stayed there for about eight years.

Miss Weatherbee, I think, was her name. She was a good, strict principal who had standards to follow, even in report cards. She would go through the report cards, especially the comments that teachers wrote, and she would make comments on the report cards. She went through our plan books, too. It's good to work for people like

that, because you know what you're aiming for, and you know what is expected of you, and you carry out those expectations.

Then we had a Mr. Shimizu. He was allergic to fresh flowers, and he'd get deathly sick when he got a fresh flower *lei*. So when we found that out, we used to give him paper *leis*. He was a very nice person. I got along with every one of my principals.

I had the fifth grade there. One year we'd have the good class, the upper section, and then one year we'd have the lower section. In a way, I think that's good, because you can set your plans up for that particular group of children. But I tell you, when you have the lowest, you really have to have a lot of patience to work with them because they were mentally very slow. And then if you were used to a group of accelerated youngsters, you'd feel frustrated at times. How are you going to help these kids?

There was one little boy, such a nice kid. When I think about it, he really should have had better help than I could give him. He couldn't read. But he could put things together. He gave me a little parakeet, and he knew how to put the cage together. How did he do it? I've never seen him [since then]. I don't know what he finally did. You read about kids now being so frustrated, they get into trouble later on.

Then I had a combination fifth- and sixth-grade class. I had the accelerated group. They were such a pleasurable group to have. The principal let us have a cottage, so it was a self-contained room. They chose their own teams, they had captains, and they worked for credit, for scores, who could amass the greatest number of scores. The ones who set up a little garden outside were given extra credit. One group made curtains for the room, because this was like a cottage. The kids would keep the classroom clean, floors swept and mopped, and our sink clean. We even had our own little restroom. They kept that clean, too. Their parents didn't object. They felt that they were getting some training.

They put up a nice puppet show. I was so proud of them. One of them is now teaching art at McKinley. I used to see another one who played the flute. When she was in junior school she would play the flute, and I knew her mother and father. I had one friend who—well, she knew how to help them, I guess—preferred having the slow kids. But I liked this rotation bit. It was fair for the other teachers who didn't want to be with the slow kids the whole year. But it was a pleasure to have the top kids. I could have had them forever (chuckles).

Then another time, at the same Kūhiō School, the teachers in the upper level—I had only the upper-level fifth and sixth graders—they didn't want to teach music. So they asked me if I would take their classes and teach their classes the music that was required. And I said, "Sure, I'll take them." So they would take care of my class while I took their classes for music.

## Dole Intermediate School

After Kūhiō School, I took another year off. When I went back the openings were in the intermediate schools, so that's how I got to Dole Intermediate. When I went to Dole, I stayed there until I retired [in 1972].

I've had a good relationship with parents. I'll give you one instance with one of the parents I had there. This little kid, he was a sassy little kid. And he was in my last-period class. He was supposed to come and get his books by a certain time, and he didn't come. I couldn't keep on waiting for him so I locked the door.

The vice-principal came to me and said, "I've got some problem with one of the parents." So I talked to her over the phone, and I said, "You know, what would you do if your boy came back to you and sassed you," because he had sassed me on something. So I said, "Well, tough. You're not going to get your books."

And so she said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. He didn't tell me that." And the next day she brought a little gift to me, and that kid behaved himself the rest of the time. (Laughs) The kids will go home and tell one story, and if the parents believe 'em hook, line, and sinker, they don't get the teacher's point of view. So I always feel that when somebody tells me anything about somebody, I want to hear the other point of view, too.

I required discipline in the room. I set up the rules in the beginning, for example, no gum chewing in class. And some of the rules helped me to decide what they could do and what they couldn't do, so we worked things out like that. And at least one of the things that they mentioned was that I was fair with them. I could be strict, but I was fair with them.

At Dole I had some of the top kids for the news-writing class. So these would be the top ninth graders. And it was good to work with them, because you'd just give them a suggestion and they'd go right ahead and do it on their own, to put up the school newspaper, to go out and get the news.

The kids had the opportunity to spend two nights at the Kāhala Hilton [Hotel] paying only twenty-one dollars. They had their competition there. I said, "Ask your parents if you can have the money to attend this conference." And so I had, I think, about twenty kids that signed up for it. And then, being the advisor, I was also invited to be there, because you had to be there with your kids. I had a room all to myself—a big room, pineapple on the table, an orchid on the bed with a piece of chocolate. Oh, it was really nice, and the kids enjoyed it.

I had one boy whose father had a photography business. He was a little rascal. We had our little Polaroid camera, so he used to do the pictures for the paper. In fact, we won one award at one conference. So my kids always did very well. But they were good kids, not because of me, but they were good kids. They had the ability.

You know, in the newspapers you hear only about the negative things about Kalihi kids being from such a bad area, from the [low-income] housing, always getting into trouble. And people used to feel sorry for me when I said I was at Dole. They'd ask, "Where is Dole?" I said, "Up Kam[ehameha IV Road]." [They said] something like, "Poor thing, you." And I said, "Not poor thing, me. I got good kids there. I'd rather have those kids than some of the sassy kids in some of the other areas."

## Retirement

I retired in 1972. I remember that date because I keep referring to it. Some dates stand out in my mind, others don't.

I enjoyed my teaching, [but] I didn't miss it because I did substitute for two years after I retired. I know what substitutes have to go through when they go to a strange school. I said, "I'll go only to Dole. I know the program, I know the setup. I'll feel comfortable there." I think if their regular teacher has a good program in the class—they know just what to do, they know what is expected of them—they will do the work regardless of who comes in.

At the end of the year, when we retired, the O'ahu Retired Teachers Association [ORTA] invited us to a luncheon. And I signed up right away, and I paid my life membership dues. They needed somebody to do the newsletter, and nobody would do it. And I said, "You relieve me of the membership chairmanship, I'll take over the newswriting of the newsletter." So I've had it ever since.

Somebody said one time, "Why don't we have an obit column?" I said, "It gets too depressing because we lose so many." In April we have our memorial service, and that's when we print all the names of the deceased. But we don't write up anything personal on them. The only personal things that I've really put in the paper is when somebody gets married at this late stage. And that's interesting, because life goes on. We don't want the endings of lives.

I do Meals on Wheels every Monday. I've been doing it for the last, I'd say, about twelve years. I do the driving. I have a partner who delivers the meals to the client. Right now we have the Kapahulu-Kaimukī area. And I feel that as long as I can drive, I don't mind doing that because they really need people to help.

I can tell you, our retired teachers, the ones who belong [to ORTA]—and I know them personally—they are baby-sitting—grandbaby-sitting, you know, or niece- and nephew-sitting. And then I have friends—retired teachers—who are taking care of spouses or relatives.

Then I have friends who volunteer for the Foster [Botanical] Garden regularly. There's another one who volunteers weekly for Bishop Museum in the botany department. There are those who work for their churches. There's one who works at the St. Francis Hospital Gift Shop. She's done that for almost twenty years. There was one that used to work at

the Kaiser Hospital volunteer desk for information. We have people who are docents at 'Iolani Palace.

We have teachers who may not be active in the retired teachers association but they are members. They join the senior citizen club within their area. The others think that—I guess they feel intimidated or they feel that they are not qualified, so they expect the former teachers to assume the leadership roles. And they are very active that way.

For me it was a satisfying profession. You have to like children. You have to be able to work with them. Some may not have the patience. My daughter never wanted to teach. My granddaughter never wanted to teach. That's fine. They fit into their own niches. So whatever they feel comfortable in, whatever they are good at, too, whatever they want to do.

We've had exchange teachers from the Mainland in our schools. And of course, in the beginning some of the [local] kids would try to see if they could put one over on them. But

if they were strong teachers, they got along well with the kids. So it depends on the person, himself or herself, I think. You can go anyplace, and if you know what you're doing, and if you like working with young people, I think there can be an understanding, there can be mutual respect. But the first thing is to like your job, to enjoy it.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In 1917 Central Grammar School began enrolling students based on their English oral proficiency.

<sup>2</sup> The site of historic Central Middle School is the location where Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani had her palace built in 1878. In 1908, the building was converted to Central Grammar School.

<sup>3</sup> Childhood game played with a peg and a stick.

<sup>4</sup> Liquor distilled from ti root

<sup>5</sup> Japanese-language schools were closed or dissolved during World War II.